

And now our own nation has been plunged into the awful conflict.

The Psalmist describes a cataclysm, in which the "earth should be removed," and the "mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." But he prefaces this picture of destruction with the declaration, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear."

The political world to-day presents a picture of destruction which parallels the cataclysm pictured by the Psalmist. Yet as our nation enters the great conflict, we can say, as did the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength . . . therefore will not we fear."

A daily paper closed a recent editorial on the entrance of the United States into the war with the simple but sublime words, "God reigns." God reigns; and He reigns in infinite justice, and in infinite love. As we look abroad over the earth, our eyes are blinded by the smoke of battle; but we can still look upward to Him who "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." Above the roar of battle and the clash of arms, we can still hear a voice from heaven proclaim, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice."

It is a terrible thing to enter into war. But if we go into the conflict animated only by principles of right and justice, we can face the struggle saying, "Therefore will not we fear."

Facing the unknown future which is before us, as we plunge into the world war, we would do well to recall the words of Washington in his address before the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1788: "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God."

New Bloomfield, Pa.

THE BIBLE AND THE STATE.

By Wm. Laurie Hill.

There are many men who are so anxious to divorce Civil Government from Religion, and the State, that they are tempted to go "beyond beyant." In many of our States the Bible has been banished from the public schools, and is not allowed to be read there.

What is the State? It is simply all the people in a certain territory ruled by and through the voice of those people who dwell there.

A State is no more intelligent than the average intelligence of its people, and, therefore, we find the people of all States willing to tax themselves for the purpose of educating their children and fitting them for intelligent citizenship.

We find that there is nothing that the people of a State are more critical about than the text books from which their children are taught.

Children are taught geography, history, arithmetic and higher mathematics, philosophy and many of the languages in our schools. Then many of them go to college and universities to finish in some special departments, so as to be what is generally called "well educated," and ready to occupy a high place in the world.

Yes, men are careful to educate their children mentally. But, unless boys and girls receive a spiritual education in their homes they have no chance to hear even God's word read in the day schools in many of our States.

Now let us ask, "What is the Bible?" Is it just a compilation of ancient history and

of Israelitish literature? Or is it God's revelation of Himself to man, and the real foundation of all human religion and law?

Accepting the Bible as the word of God and calling attention to the fact that all human law is derived from this Bible, we cannot understand why any Christian of any Protestant denomination should object to the Bible being read in our public schools.

We teach our children Greek and Latin fables and think no harm will come to them by learning Latin and Greek through fables. But, "Don't read the Bible in school every day or you will be mixing Church and State."

We have many different denominations, both Jew and Gentile, and for sooth we must banish the Book of books from our schools because!—Well, we want any rational Christian man to tell us why?

To say that a passage read from the Bible in school every day should give offense to any one—Jew or Gentile—is just preposterous. Without the Bible, you would have no law, and much that we call literature would be but a poor specimen if you take out of it the Bible that is in it.

We close by saying that it is a great piece of presumption in man to banish, or to desire to banish, from our schools of instruction the Text book that claims as its author the God that made and preserves us. How long will a State remain such a State as God will bless that thus insults the Divine Author of all things?

Maxton, N. C.

CONCERNING THE CHURCH—THEN AND NOW.

By George Q. Peyton.

If we were to base our judgment on the condition of the country church from the time and temper of the articles that from time to time appear in the Church papers, we would conclude that it was already dead and all that remains to be done is to say, "Earth to earth and dust to dust," and cover up its grave. As I do not agree with this aspect of the subject, I want to say something on the other side. Having lived in the country for nearly three-quarters of a century, during fifty years of which I have had more or less to do with country churches, I rise and remark that in my opinion they are better off now than they ever were! I speak of the churches in Piedmont Virginia, and to prove my contention I will state some facts. The financial side of the church is ordinarily a fair exhibit of its prosperity. I remember the time, not so far back either, when the Methodist minister in charge of the circuit in which I live was only promised \$200 per annum for preaching at six places, usually only one-half of this amount was paid, so it amounted to his having to "exist" on about \$100 a year. He boarded "round." When he left at the end of four years, if he stayed that long, the amount due him was scratched off. I remember that the most substantial man in the circuit was assessed, they call it "apportioned" in the Presbyterian Church, twenty dollars to support the minister. After he had been preaching about a year this man handed him two dollars and a half, with the remark that it was the last cent that he had in the world. The minister handed it back to him and said that he would not take the last cent from any man! Now the minister in this circuit gets over \$800 per annum, and it is paid promptly. The salary of the Baptist minister for preaching one Sunday in a month at one church was \$100 a year and nothing else, as he lived on his own land. Now he gets \$400 for the same service, and as he preaches at

two others places just as able as this one, it is fair to presume that he gets at least \$1,000 per annum. The salary of the Episcopal minister for services at four places was \$500. Now he gets \$1,200 for services at two places. The Presbyterian minister's salary was \$600 and nothing else, and as I had something to do with raising the money for his support, I remember that it was a great scuffle to do it. Now he gets \$1,200, and it is promptly paid every month. In addition to the above named sums of money, each one of these ministers has a comfortable home, with bath rooms, hot and cold water, stables, poultry houses, ice-house, woodhouse, from three to five acres of the very best land, and the church furnishes two of them, and maybe all for what I know, a horse and buggy. The condition of the Sunday-schools at that time was worse than that of the churches. The Methodists and Baptists had a union school for a part of the year. Along about the time strawberries commenced to bloom notice would be given that the school would organize "next Sunday." Members of both congregations would accordingly assemble. New officers and teachers would be elected and notice would be given that the school would begin "next Sunday." Next Sunday the school would meet. All the new officers and teachers would resign, the old stagers would have to take charge, and the school would run with more or less, generally less, interest until the big meetings began on second Sunday in August. Everyone had to go to these meetings, and that would put an end to the Sunday-school until next strawberry time! The Episcopal and Presbyterian schools would open and shut spasmodically. Sometimes they held on until the Christmas tree, but that generally ended them until the roads got good in April. Now all these schools, and each church has its own school, run all the year. They all have a good corps of teachers now; best of all, they take an interest in the benevolent work of the churches. For the year ending 1916, the Presbyterian church, sixty-seven members, gave \$600 to benevolences. The Sunday-school, eighty-four members, gave \$131.00 to Foreign Missions alone, which I venture to say was more than all the four churches and Sunday-schools gave to this cause twenty years ago. Now, if all those articles which from time to time appear in the Church and secular papers ehped the country church in any way, I am sure that we would be glad to see them, but I think that it is fair to say that their tendency is to hinder and not to help, usually they cast a damper on those engaged in country church work. Instead of heartening them, they dishearten. They amount to saying to them you might as well give up, you cannot go much further. Then, again, they give such a gloomy view of things in the country that no one wants to live there. In a word they exploit the city at the expense of the country, and to show the evil effects of this in the last few weeks the papers have been full of articles showing the hard times in the cities. In some of them there have been serious riots on account of the scarcity and high cost of the necessities of life. At this very time there are lying in the fields of Virginia hundreds, and maybe thousands, of bushels of corn unshucked for the crows to eat. The reason for this waste is while the cities are overcrowded with hungry people there are not enough laborers in the country to save the crops. The Federal Reserve banks have sent out circulars stating that the wheat crop in South America is a total failure. This is a loss of nearly two hundred millions of bushels, and it will seriously affect the food supply of the world. They, therefore, urge the farmers